

with the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and there are a lot of good ideas coming out on how to solve that problem.

The problem I have is, we allocated \$45 million for this in the last year, and \$44 million of it remains in the bank and has not been spent. This bill has \$176 million, but it does not tell us what we are going to do with it. It just has \$176 million.

So that brings us to a quarter of a billion dollars on this retirement home that houses 600 of our best, who have proven they have been our best through their service to our country.

Now, if you divide this out, you come to almost \$400,000 per room, if we created a new style. And the plans, the proposals are all in the \$480 million and \$490 million range that have been offered up on the different options.

Congressman GENE TAYLOR from Mississippi, in the debate on this issue, says we can fully restore this facility to what it was beforehand for \$80 to \$90 million. That is what the estimates are. Private industry estimates for a brand-new naval home facility are that it could be built to the desired standards—that means up to date for Americans with disabilities; up to date on size, doors; up to date on the ability to handle people with advanced aging and disease and long-term consequences—for \$125 million to \$150 million.

So the question I raise with this amendment is not whether we should do it. It is: We have \$221 million, after this bill goes through, that is going to be for that, and we are not through, and there is nothing in the report language that would direct us on how we are going to make a decision on spending this money and what it is going to go for.

I will agree with the goal of the chairman that we ought to replace this facility, and those people involved in that area ought to have a lot to say about it. My concern is the cost. If you really take the \$589.54 million, which is option No. 1 that is coming out for this, and the estimate that it will take 13 years to get us back to where we were, that is \$1 million a room.

I want to contrast that with what we can do for \$1 million. If you look at the average price of a new home in Mississippi for a single person to live in, it is less than \$80,000 a year. We could buy every veteran who lives in that home a brand-new home and provide nursing care for 10 years—for 10 years—for what is being proposed in replacing this.

So my real question is, what is the plan? Where is the commonsense oversight? How much are we going to spend? And before we send more money in an emergency appropriations, we ought to know what that is, and that ought to be decided before we spend more money, especially since \$44 million that has been appropriated has not been spent.

All I am saying is that we should consider that. I would hope we would

wait to send additional supplemental money for this until we know exactly where it is going to go or specify exactly where it is going to go.

We do know that to be considered an emergency we need to meet the requirements. I believe we need to meet the requirements for our veterans, especially in this home because we have some of them in Washington, DC, and we have them living all across the country. But the fact is, we don't know where the money is going to go. We don't know how much money we are going to spend. We don't have a plan. Nothing is agreed to. Why not go through the regular process with this? Why not go through the authorization and appropriation process on this since we have not spent the money already and we don't know how this money is going to be spent?

So it is a simple, straightforward question: Wouldn't it make more sense to do it under the regular order since this is definitely not an emergency now? Under their five different plans they have offered up, this would not be an emergency.

I would ask the consideration of the chairman if we could do it in a better, more efficient way that is better for the taxpayer; if, in fact, we could withdraw this money at this time and bring it back through the regular order to accomplish that?

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 3713

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set the pending amendment aside and call up amendment No. 3713.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered. The amendment is pending.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I will be brief because I know we are in debate on another amendment.

Avian flu is the concern of not just this Congress but of this country and the rest of the world. As it has spread by migratory birds—and in some instances around the world—it has infected humans. It is the responsible thing on the part of this country to prepare for that.

Part of preparation is not only being prepared for the human side, it is being prepared to track its entry and possible migration through the United States. Today we have devoted, with the leadership of the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, moneys to the Fish and Wildlife Service to successfully do that, and we do it between Russia and Alaska. Unfortunately,

there is a lot of geography in North America that goes uncovered and has routes for migratory birds.

My amendment is simple. We would like to reprogram \$5 million of surveillance money that is in this emergency spending bill to the Smithsonian, directed to work with all of their non-profit affiliates to set up a migratory bird surveillance program. This Congress has committed a tremendous amount of dollars to be prepared and to respond if bird flu becomes a human-to-human transmission. If we look around the world at successes, one would look at Taiwan and Japan specifically, where their migratory birds surveillance program detected, contained, and eliminated on their islands the infection. That is not to say that they are home free, but they certainly have a track record of eliminating the threat, even before it hit in total their domestic population of poultry.

We are concerned about the human-to-human transmission. With that concern has come a tremendous amount of resources from the Federal Government. It deserves us spending as much time focused on the economic impact before human-to-human transmission. I think it is safe to say that a majority of this country can be affected with our poultry flocks, and we have an opportunity, with a successful surveillance program, to make sure that we do what Japan and Taiwan did, and that is detect its entry, try to contain it, try to eliminate it when it first enters.

I am not sure that we have an entity that has a track record of doing what we are asking the Smithsonian. In the past, the Appropriations Committee has devoted some funds to some entities that suggested they could do it. The reality is they are not doing it today. This effort is to take an agency, a Federal arm, and to try to extend to them the resources to do what they say they can do and that is a successful migratory bird surveillance program.

I ask my colleagues to support the amendment. Without it, we have no hope of a surveillance program for migratory birds, with the exception of what we currently do in Alaska with Fish and Wildlife. We have a commitment to make sure that the efforts of the Smithsonian and their successes are integrated into the database of Fish and Wildlife. This is not to duplicate. It is not to create something that might be a threat to the existing program we have under way. It is to complement it. It is to say that we understand this is a large continent and that we have to tap the pool of people who are in nonprofits across the country and across the continent, if we want to be successful with a surveillance program.

I ask my colleagues to support reprogramming \$5 million for this year. It is not new money. It is reprogrammed money. It is money that we had devoted to surveillance. It is shifted from human surveillance to migratory bird surveillance.